

ADDRESSING CONCERNS FROM IMPORTED DRYWALL



What is the problem?

After Hurricane Katrina, rebuilding throughout the Gulf states greatly increased the demand for drywall. In February 2009, the state health department began getting health complaints from residents who had rebuilt their homes using imported drywall. The health complaints included headaches, respiratory infections, eye irritations, dry coughs, and nosebleeds.

What did Tracking do?

LEPHT began logging cases from call-in surveys that captured information such as the physical characteristics of the home, exposure duration, and health effects experienced by members of the household. The cases were mapped to assess the magnitude of the health problem and to track locations. State health department staff worked with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to identify drywall exposure cases for indoor air testing.

Improved public health

Air monitoring results helped staff identify the chemicals of most concern and develop a public health plan of action. Public health messages provided residents information and ideas on how to reduce exposure and remove tainted drywall from their homes.